

I claim:

1. A support belt adapted for encircling and being secured to the waist of a wearer for providing both back and abdominal muscle support during strenuous activity while providing a non-interfering support and a non-interfering fit with the skeletal structure of the ribs and hips of the wearer, the belt comprising:

- a. an elongate base having a longitudinal axis and opposite outer ends and of a length sufficient to encircle the waist of the wearer, the base including an enlarged back support area and an enlarged abdominal support area, each area of a first fixed predetermined vertical height and each area being integral within the base, **[and made of a semi-rigid material wrapped in a flexible cloth for comfort]**, the areas being disposed within the base such that the areas are opposite one another when the belt is encircling the waist of the wearer;

- b. reduced side areas within the base, having a second predetermined vertical height smaller than said first predetermined vertical height and disposed intermediately of the back support and abdominal support areas and opposite one another between the hips and ribs of the wearer when the belt is encircling the waist, said reduced side areas being sized to allow the belt to be sufficiently tightened against the back and abdominal walls without encountering the skeletal structure of the ribs or hips of the wearer thereby evenly distributing and providing optimum support to both the back and abdominal walls and accommodate bending and side-to-side motion of the wearer; **and**

- c. a first fastening means **[comprising a first pad portion at one end of the base and a second pad portion disposed at the other end of the base, the first and second pad portions adapted to be placed in overlying,] for** releasably **securing** **[secured relationship with one another when] the belt [is encircling] to encircle the waist of the wearer[;**

- d. an elongate strap of flexible, generally non-stretchable material secured to and coaxial with the base, and having free opposite ends;

- e. a second, cinchable fastening means on the strap comprising a fastener secured to one of said strap ends and a flap on the other end adapted to be received

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7. A support belt adapted for encircling and being secured to the waist of a wearer for providing both back and abdominal muscle support during strenuous activity while providing a non-interfering fit with the skeletal structure of the ribs and hips of the wearer, the belt comprising:

a. an elongate base having a longitudinal axis and opposite outer ends and made of flexible material to accommodate the various movements of the waist and associated placement of the hips and ribs of the wearer;

b. an enlarged back support area having a first fixed predetermined vertical height and integral within the base such that the area supports the back of the wearer when the belt is encircling the waist of the wearer;

c. an enlarged first abdominal support portion located on one outer end of the base and having a fixed predetermined vertical height substantially the same as the first fixed predetermined vertical height of the back support and positioned to define an abdominal support area opposite the back support area and located in the vicinity of the abdominal wall of the wearer when the belt is encircling the waist;

d. an enlarged second abdominal support portion located on the other outer end of the base and the first abdominal support portion located on one outer end of the base and having a fixed predetermined vertical height coexistent with said first abdominal support height and positioned such that the abdominal support area is diametrically opposite the back support area and is located in the vicinity of the abdominal wall of the wearer when the belt is encircling the waist, said abdominal support portions adapted to be located in overlying relationship with one another when the belt is encircling the waist;

e. reduced side sections of the base having a second predetermined vertical height smaller than said first predetermined vertical height and located on the base intermediately of the areas and opposite one another between the hips and ribs of the wearer when the belt is encircling the waist, said reduced side sections being sized to allow the belt to be sufficiently tightened against both the back and abdominal walls without encountering the skeletal structure of the ribs or hips of the wearer thereby evenly distributing and providing optimum support to both the back and abdominal walls; and

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[f. a first fastening means for releasably securing the base about the waist of the wearer;]

g. an elongate strap of flexible, generally non-stretchable material secured adjacent one base end [to] and coaxial with the base, and having a free end [opposite ends]; and

h. a [second,] cinchable fastening means [on the strap comprising a fastener] secured to [one of said strap ends] the other base end and [a flap] adapted to be received in and secured by said [fastener] elongated strap and cinched to fit when the belt is placed around the waist of the wearer.

8. The support belt of claim 7, [wherein said] further comprising a second fastening means [further] which comprises:

a. a first strap hook and loop fastener pad on the strap and disposed inwardly of the fastener at said one end; and

b. a second strap hook and loop fastener pad on the flap and complementary with the first strap hook and loop fastener pad, whereby the flap may be secured to the belt when the belt is encircling the waist.

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9. The support belt of claim 8, wherein the abdominal support portions, when in overlying relationship with one another, have abutting surfaces and wherein the first fastening means further comprises a first hook and loop fastener pad on the abutting surface of one abdominal support portion and a complementary abdominal hook and loop fastener pad on the complementary abutting surface of the other abdominal support portion, whereby the belt may be secured to the waist of the wearer when the belt is encircling the waist and the abdominal support portions are disposed in overlying relationship with one another.

10. The support belt of claim 8, further comprising utility rings secured to the belt at the reduced side sections for securing the belt directly to a harness or implement to be moved or lifted by the wearer that provides an ability to use the trunk of the body to aid in the activity with added safety.

11. The support belt of claim 8, wherein said back support area and said abdominal support areas are each of approximately five inches in vertical height and the reduced side portions are each of approximately three inches in vertical height.

12. The support belt of claim 1, the first fastening means further comprising:
- a. an elongate strap of flexible, generally non-stretchable material secured to one base end, coaxial with the base and having a free end;
 - b. a fastener secured to the other base end and adapted to receive and secure said free strap end and cinchable to fit when the belt is placed around the waist of the wearer.

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